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DIA review  
completed.

# Intelligence Memorandum

*Communist Military and Economic Assistance to North Vietnam  
Since The Paris Agreement Was Signed*

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17 October 1973

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**Communist Military and Economic  
Assistance to North Vietnam  
Since the Paris Agreement  
Was Signed**

**The Key Points**

- There has been little direct evidence on military imports by North Vietnam since the signing of the Paris Agreement on 27 January 1973, or since our last memorandum on this subject [redacted]

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[redacted] The key PRC/North Vietnam border crossing, where large amounts of military hardware were seen before the cease-fire, has been photographed less than a dozen times since January, and cloud cover has limited the value of even this photography. [redacted]

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[redacted] some indications of continuing military imports, but nothing that would give us a feel for the overall level of such imports.

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- The sum of our evidence, however, indicates the North Vietnamese have continued to receive military aid from both the PRC and the USSR, although at a rate well below that received during 1972.

- The relevance of such a cutback to North Vietnam's immediate military capabilities is probably minimal, since North Vietnam already has an inventory of military equipment large enough to sustain a major offensive for the duration of an entire dry season. Logistic activity in Indochina has continued at a high level in recent months, and the North Vietnamese are now preparing to move additional quantities of goods through the Laotian Panhandle.

- Hanoi continues to receive firm assurances of economic assistance from its Communist allies, including specific commitments from both the USSR and China for 1974. Spurred by continued large overland deliveries, Hanoi's total imports in 1973 may reach a new peak of 2.8 million metric tons.

Note: This memorandum was prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency.

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Discussion

Military Aid

*Direct Evidence*

1. Since the Vietnam Settlement Agreement was signed on 27 January, our ability to estimate Soviet and Chinese military aid going to North Vietnam has been impaired by the low level of photo-reconnaissance over North Vietnam. We now have no photography from manned overflights of North Vietnam, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] While photography has confirmed that the North Vietnamese have received a steady inflow of Soviet and PRC imports throughout the post-cease-fire period, the quality and infrequency of the photography have made it impossible to identify any military equipment as having definitely arrived since the Paris Agreement was signed.

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We have received numerous reports of North Vietnamese buying rice, petroleum, and other economic goods in South Vietnam for their troops since the cease-fire, but have not seen any significant purchases of weapons and ammunition. Although the North Vietnamese probably can buy some military equipment from individual ARVN officers who are willing to traffic with the enemy, the amounts involved will almost certainly be fairly small.

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**TOP SECRET****Indirect Evidence: Logistic Activity Within Indochina**

9. The brisk pace of NVA logistic activity within Indochina since the cease-fire may be regarded as circumstantial evidence that Hanoi is continuing to receive imports of military supplies, or at least is not unduly concerned about drawing down its stocks within North Vietnam. At the end of the last dry season, Hanoi moved thousands of tons of supplies into South Vietnam and Laos from North Vietnam. Since July the North Vietnamese have shipped more than 7,000 tons of ordnance into southern Quang Binh Province just above the DMZ, including ammunition for virtually every type of weapon in their arsenal. In recent weeks, moreover, thousands of tons of unspecified material (a large part of which is undoubtedly military supplies) have been shipped from Thanh Hoa in the central Panhandle of North Vietnam to storage areas near Vinh and are awaiting future delivery. Finally, extensive preparations have been made by logistics units in the Laotian Panhandle indicating that large quantities of supplies will be moved in the months ahead.

10. It is impossible to tie the pace of logistic activity directly to the current level of military aid. The business-as-usual attitude of the North Vietnamese strongly suggests, however, that the Communists are not concerned about being resupplied. The North Vietnamese would be breaking sharply with past precedent if they depleted their rear base areas without being confident that their stocks would be replenished.

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13. On 8 June, China and North Vietnam signed a military and economic aid pact for 1974, indicating that some military aid would continue. More recently, on 5 October, a protocol to implement the 8 June agreement on Chinese military equipment and materials in 1974 for North Vietnam was signed in Peking. On the other hand, there has been no mention of a military aid pact with the USSR in the press.

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#### **Future Aid Deliveries**

14. In any case, we believe that there has been a slackening of military aid in recent months in one important area. With the halt in US air operations over North Vietnam, Hanoi's requirement for surface-to-air missiles and other types of air defense equipment has fallen to only a fraction of its previous level. Since it seems likely that Hanoi replenished its stocks early this year, after the intensive bombing which ended in December 1972, there would be no need for further deliveries beyond this unless the air war was resumed. Communist military assistance probably will continue at least to the extent necessary to replace and maintain North Vietnam's current inventories. In addition, because North Vietnam's weapons production capability is limited to small arms and ammunition, its sophisticated air defense equipment requires foreign assistance for spare parts and probably for repairs and maintenance as well. The Soviets will almost certainly have to provide continued training and replacement parts for such sophisticated weaponry as the SA-3 missiles.

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the Chinese, for their part, are still involved in the maintenance of North Vietnamese radar installations, and they are likely to continue such activity for some time to come.

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#### **Economic Aid**

##### ***Total Imports***

15. Hanoi's total imports of economic goods in 1973 may reach a new high of 2.8 million tons, compared with a 1972 level of nearly 1.8 million tons and a pre-mining peak of about 2.4 million tons in 1971. Seaborne imports will probably amount to 1.3 million tons in 1973 - close to the 1972 level but substantially below pre-mining tonnages. However, overland imports could reach 1.5 million tons, more than offsetting any shortfall in seaborne imports.

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17. Major commodities delivered thus far in 1973 continue to be food

[redacted] petroleum [redacted] and fertilizer [redacted]

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Nearly all of the seaborne petroleum has come from the USSR, which has also supplied most of the fertilizer imports and about one-half of the food. Compared to the same period in 1972, when seaborne shipping was restricted by the mining, 1973 imports of food are higher

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[redacted] fertilizer is higher

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but petroleum is lower [redacted] apparently because of overland deliveries via the China-North Vietnam pipeline system.

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### Reconstruction

21. Much of the current imports represent commodities to maintain consumption levels and rebuild war-damaged stocks. Some imports, however, consist of machinery and equipment to support Hanoi's slow-moving reconstruction efforts.

supplies are being provided to North Vietnam under the terms of the 1973 aid agreements signed last winter.

22. In addition to commodity transactions and project aid, the Communist countries are providing substantial amounts of technical assistance for North Vietnam's reconstruction program under the terms of the 1973 aid agreements.

Virtually all of North Vietnam's bomb-damaged industrial installations appear on the project lists, and some new construction is occurring in electric power, coal mining, fertilizer production, and geological prospecting.

23. Notwithstanding these efforts, the actual progress to date in reconstruction has been limited. Electric power capacity is about two-thirds of pre-bombing levels. In textiles, cement, and steel production, only a small

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fraction of capacity is back in service. Coal exports have been resumed on a significant scale, but probably because of depressed demand in the general economy. Greatly increased foreign aid will be required to complete the reconstruction program. As this aid picks up, we can expect further changes in the composition of North Vietnam's imports toward machinery and equipment and away from commodities.

#### Aid Negotiations

24. In addition to its current aid receipts, Hanoi has already obtained commitments from most of the Communist aid donors for assistance in 1974. North Vietnam has signed agreements calling for both military and economic aid for 1974 with China, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Mongolia, and North Korea. Thus far, Moscow has announced an economic aid pact for 1974 but none pertaining to military assistance, and no agreements have yet been signed with Czechoslovakia or East Germany. The North Vietnamese, however, are expected to obtain commitments at least for economic aid from the two remaining East European aid donors.

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